ment is constructing an additional berth at Port Blair to cope with the increase in traffic. This is apart from the Wharf constructed at Hope Town and two berths constructed at Phoenix Bay for inter-Island vessels and five ferry jetties constructed during the Seventh Five Year Plan.

Shipping Service from Visakhapatnam to Port Blair

939. DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state whether Government propose to have shipping transportation from Visakhapatnam to Port Blair on a regular basis keeping in view the importance of both the ports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): Shipping Corporation of India offer sailings to and from Visakhapatnam to Port Blair once every three months as decided by the Andaman & Nicobar Administration. Assessment of the passenger and cargo prospects in this sector does not show prospects for more frequent sailings.

Increase in TB Cases

940. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that more than two lakhs people suffer from TB in the country;

(b) if so, whether this figure has been increasing considerably year after year; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to provide maximum relief to the T.B. patients in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There is no evidence to suggest that prevalance of TB disease is increasing every year. However, due to increase in the population, and prevalence rate remaining almost the same, the absolute No. of Tuberculosis cases is increasing every year.

(c) Under the National TB Control Programme a District TB Centre is being established in every district of the country by the States to organise a community wide District TB Programme in association with the General Health Institutions of the District to offer free diagnosis, treatment and preventive facilities to the patients and to the community. So far 371 District TB Centres have been established in the country.

Besides, 300 TB clinics are also functioning. About 46,000 TB beds are also available in the country to cater to the needs of emergent, complicated cases and patients requiring surgical intervention.

BCG Vaccination is being given as a preventive measure under the Universal Immunization Programme.

Anti TB Drugs, X-ray Machine/film rolls and equipment are supplied to the States/UTs by the Centre under the National TB Control Programme. Drugs are supplied to the TB patients free of cost. In order to reduce the duration of treatment, short-course Chemotherapy has already been introduced in 44 districts and 75 more districts are being covered during the current year.

Legislation on Removal of Kidneys of Persons Meeting Fatal Accidents

941. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Singapore has recently allowed the removal of kidneys of persons meeting fatal accidents;

(b) whether Government of India also propose to enact such a legislation to enable the Doctors to remove kidneys of the persons meeting fatal accidents to benefit the kidney patients in the country; and